

Message Text

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PAGE 01 YAOUND 04009 071725Z

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 SS-20 NSC-10 H-03

CU-04 SMI-01 CPR-02 /079 W

----- 066030

R 071645Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2169

INFO AMCONSUL DOUALA VIA POUCH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE YAOUNDE 4009

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL, CM, US

SUBJECT: RETURN OF AFO-A-KOM

REF: YAOUNDE 3991

1. SUMMARY: UNCERTAINTY REMAINS ON WHEN (AND PERHAPS IF) THE STATUE AFO-A-KOM WILL BE RETURNED TO LAIKOM AND IF SO IF AMERICAN DELEGATION WILL ACCOMPANY IT. HOWEVER PRESIDENT AHIDJO HAS ASSURED US HE WILL GIVE MATTER HIS PERSONAL ATTENTION, AND THERE IS SOME HOPE THAT ANSWER WILL BE FAVORABLE.

2. VISITING DELEGATION MET LATE AFTERNOON DECEMBER 6 WITH MINISTER AND SECGEN OF MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE.

THEY WERE ABLE TO HAVE A HELPFUL EXCHANGE ON SOME ASPECTS OF CREATING A NATIONAL MUSEUM AND CONSERVING NATIONAL TREASURES BUT MADE LITTLE HEADWAY IN ELICITING A DECISION ON WHEN STATUE WOULD BE RETURNING LAIKOM AND WHETHER DELEGATION AND JOURNALISTS WOULD BE PERMITTED TO ACCOMPANY IT. MINISTER HOWEVER DID KEEP DOOR OPEN BY SAYING REPLY WOULD BE MADE LATER.

3. PRESIDENT AHIDJO RECEIVED DELEGATION AND AMBASSADOR AT 11:00 AM DEC 7. USUALLY UNSMILING AND SOBER ON OFFICIAL OCCASIONS, HE APPEARED PARTICULARLY GLUM ON THIS ONE, DUE UNDOUBTEDLY TO STRAIN OF PAST WEEK. HOWEVER HE WARMED UP
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CONSIDERABLY DURING 20-MINUTE MEETING AND VISITORS SEEMED PLEASED

BY RECEPTION. GUSSMAN PRESENTED PRESIDENT NIXON'S LETTER WITH SOME WELL-PREPARED COMMENTS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OCCASION AND ROBBINS PRESENTED LETTER FROM SENATOR HUMPHREY. PRESIDENT WAS GRACIOUS IN HIS ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THESE LETTERS TO WHICH HE SAID HE WOULD REPLY AND EXPRESSED GURC'S APPRECIATION FOR ACT OF FRIENDSHIP ON PART OF AMERICAN PEOPLE IN RETURNING STATUE TO CAMEROON.

4. WITH FORMAL STATEMENTS OUT OF WAY AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED DEEP INTEREST AND HOPE OF VISITING DELEGATION TO ACCOMPANY STATUE TO KOM REGION. STRESSING INTENSE INTEREST GENERATED IN STATUE IN UNITED STATES, HE POINTED OUT VALUE OF INTEREST BY MAGAZINE WITH REPUTATION AND INTERNATIONAL CIRCULATION NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC AND ITS NON-POLEMICAL APPROACH TO SUBJECTS REPORTED ON. ROBBINS ADDED STATEMENT ON IMPORTANCE OF STATUE'S RETURN AND MEDIA COVERAGE IN ENCOURAGING COOPERATION IN FUTURE IN U.S. AS CAMEROON DEVELOPS ITS OWN NATIONAL MUSEUM AND CONSERVATION POLICIES.

5. IN REPLY PRESIDENT STATED THAT HE AWARE FROM HIS COLLABORATORS OF DELEGATION'S WISHES. HE EXPRESSED HIMSELF AS IMPRESSED WITH ARGUMENTS ADVANCED AND SAID THAT HE WOULD PERSONALLY LOOK INTO THE MATTER. INTERVIEW THUS ENDED ON A FRIENDLY AND REASONABLY HOPEFUL NOTE.
MOORE

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